

# **Memorandum of Agreement**

## **Research Permitting Process for Inventory and Monitoring Projects National Capital Network**

### **I. Background and Purpose**

In response to the Natural Resource Challenge and an increased emphasis on science based management of natural resources, the National Park Service has created 32 networks of parks linked by geography and shared natural resource characteristics to facilitate collaboration, information sharing, and economies of scale in natural resource management. The National Capital Region (NCRO) is comprised of 12 park units in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia: Antietam National Battlefield (ANTI), Catocin Mountain Park (CATO), Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park (CHOH), George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP), Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (HAFE), Manassas National Battlefield Park (MANA), Monocacy National Battlefield (MONO), National Capital Parks – Central (NACC), National Capital Parks - East (NACE), Prince William Forest Park (PRWI), Rock Creek National Park (ROCR), and Wolf Trap Farm Park (WOTR).

The purpose of this agreement is to describe and agree to an operational structure and procedure for processing research permits for inventory and monitoring projects identified in the inventory and monitoring study plans of the National Capital Network (NCN). This agreement will pertain only to projects organized and funded by the network. All other research requests will be routed through the normal process at individual park units. Most individual network research projects will involve multiple park units (up to 12 at a time). This process aims to offer a streamlined and effective process that will facilitate working with investigators across multiple park units, while maintaining the highest level of individual park involvement in the process.

### **II. Network Research Permit Process**

To implement the process described below, the NCN, Regional Inventory and Monitoring Program Coordinator is given the authority to assume the role of the “Research Coordinator” for the network projects. The Superintendent serving as Chair of the NCN Board of Directors is delegated the authority to approve/disapprove network inventory and monitoring project research permits on behalf of all 12 park units in the network.

*Step 1. Submit Application.* Using the web-based Research Permit and Reporting System (RPRS) the Principle Investigator (PI) submits an application under the NCN code. The PI also provides an electronic copy of the proposed study plan at the time the application is submitted. The Regional Inventory and Monitoring Program Coordinator (Research Coordinator) is notified by the RPRS that the application has been received.

*Step 2. Review and Process Application.* The Research Coordinator forwards the application and study plan via e-mail to all parks proposed for inclusion in the network

I&M study and requests review and input. Parks are asked to provide: a recommendation on whether or not the project should be implemented; specific conditions that the park wants to have added to the permit; and information on any other specific issues or concern. The Research Coordinator will work, as needed, with individual parks and groups of parks in resolving any specific questions or issues that are raised during the review process.

*Step 3. Prepare and Issue Permit.* If the proposed study has the support of all involved parks then the Research Coordinator proceeds with compiling the research permit and associated materials. Final written or electronic approval of the proposal from each involved park Superintendent or their designee is required. The permit is accompanied by three sets of conditions: general permit conditions; network permit conditions (all communication/coordination based) and park specific permit conditions. The permit form is then completed and a network study number assigned. Once assembled, the Chair of the NCN Board of Directors (with delegated authority) will sign the permit. The permit is then forwarded to the PI for final signature.

*Step 4. Follow-up Communication with Parks.* Once the final signed copy of the permit is returned from the PI, the Research Coordinator will then distribute copies of the signed permit package to all pertinent parks. Throughout the course of the study the Research Coordinator maintains communication with the individual parks and the PI on matters related to permit administration.

*Step 5. Program Records.* The Research Coordinator is responsible for maintaining official documentation and files of research permits issued at the network level.

*Step 6. Investigator Annual Reports.* The Research Coordinator works with the PI to ensure that Investigator Annual Report (IARs) are completed for each research project. Parks are notified when IARs have been completed and are available for viewing on the website.

It is recognized that a successful network level process requires close coordination and good communication. Therefore, maintaining thorough and regular communication between the network, parks, and PIs will be emphasized at all times.

### **III. General Provisions**

*Term of Agreement.* This agreement will remain in effect for five years from the date of the last signature. Any signatory may withdraw from the agreement upon notification of all other signatories.

*Amendments.* Any signatories may propose changes to this agreement. Any change will be in the form of an amendment, and will not take effect until all signatories have agreed to and signed the amendment.

## Approval Signatures

John Howard, Superintendent, Antietam and Monocacy National Battlefields	Date
Doug Faris, Superintendent, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park	Date
Don Campbell, Superintendent, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park	Date
Robert Sutton, Superintendent, Manassass National Battlefield	Date
Arnold Goldstein, Superintendent, National Capital Parks/Central	Date
John Hale, Superintendent, National Capital Parks/East	Date
Robert Hickman, Superintendent, Prince William Forest Park	Date
Adrienne Coleman, Superintendent, Rock Creek Park	Date
William Crockett, Superintendent, Wolf Trap Farm Park	Date